



Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. In preparation for this moment, I have taken the time to read the minutes and testimony from this Commission’s work over the past year. You certainly have gotten a lot of input from experts and work we admire and have studied as funders/investors in the hunger space.

ConAgra Foods and the ConAgra Foods Foundation have invested in Food Insecurity, in particular the child food insecurity, for more than two decades. The ConAgra Foods Foundation has a legacy of first-to-fund initiatives, embracing innovation by piloting and scaling programs from after school feeding programs to a Child Hunger Corps; a model similar to Teach for America, the Corps is a group of professionals that work in food banks for two years and over time, assess, implement and measure the impact of programs, and apply the learnings in a broader way.

Over the years we have continued to evolve our strategy based on 20-plus years of learnings – growing from program support to capacity grants and research so that we can leverage data-driven insights when possible to make informed decisions. This is similar to the way we approach problems as corporate professionals – identify a problem, analyze the data to see what works, make a plan, do the plan, check to see if it works , revise and start again.

For perspective, and to put my remarks in context – not a commercial -- ConAgra Foods is one of North America’s largest packaged food companies with foods** in 97 percent of America’s households. As such, the ConAgra Foods consumer is the average American and we, like other companies, study trends both in the macro-economic environment as well as what is on the mind within certain consumer segments.

Food insecurity – what we shorthand in our company as hunger – is the signature cause of the company and the Foundation, going beyond providing meals to invest in nonprofit capacity to deliver programs that empower families with food and nutrition knowledge and research that puts solutions within reach.



In full-disclosure, reading though the minutes and public testimony of the National Commission on Hunger, the Foundation has worked with and funded a number of organizations that have presented testimony, from Feeding America (Elaine Waxman) and Food Research Action Center (FRAC - Jim Weill), New York City Coalition Against Hunger (Joel Berg) to name a few.

We also have worked with Hunger Free Colorado (Kathy Underhill that has testified earlier today) and we have worked or are currently working with organizations that are represented by Commission members – Texas Hunger Initiative, Share our Strength and Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, and Hunger-Free Communities, and the Children’s Health Watch – working in partnership with FRAC to package Food Insecurity research in a more user friendly way. Linda Farr from the Texas Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics, who testified earlier mentioned the tool [GENIE](#), the Guide for Effective Nutrition Interventions and Education. ConAgra Foods Foundation funded the fellow at the academy that created that tool to help us answer the question -- when we looked at multiple grant requests for funding nutrition education program – what does good nutrition education look like. Glad to see that tool continues to spread so that we can all benefit from the tool.

On a personal level, I have been in my role directing the ConAgra Foods Foundation for nearly 10 years, both the Foundation’s social investing strategy and integrating the cause of child hunger across the company. I have volunteered, visited and/or funded a number of non-profit organizations ranging from feeding kids to enhancing efficiency, initiated and implemented a number of programs in the community, and been invited to speak at a number of anti-hunger conferences.

** (ConAgra Foods, Inc., (NYSE: CAG) is one of North America's largest packaged food companies with food found in 97 percent of America's households, as well as a strong commercial foods business serving restaurants and foodservice operations globally. Consumers can find recognized brands such as Banquet®, Chef Boyardee®, Egg Beaters®, Healthy Choice®, Hebrew National®, Hunt's®, Marie Callender's®, Orville Redenbacher's®, PAM®, Peter Pan®, Reddi-wip®, Slim Jim®, Snack Pack®and many other ConAgra Foods brands, along with food sold by ConAgra Foods under private brand labels, in grocery, convenience, mass merchandise, club and drug stores.)

Again, I share the ConAgra Foods Foundation story, not as a commercial announcement but more so to provide context for recommendations to come, and to represent corporations and Corporate Foundation as partners in this space.

Some refer to the ConAgra Foods Foundation as a venture capitalist in the hunger space as we fund innovative ideas that work, and invest in capacity to bring it to scale in a sustainable way.

More than 20 years ago, in 1993, working in partnership with Feeding America, we did our first grant to support Kids Café after school feeding programs. We helped scale this best practice in Oklahoma to almost 300 across the...today there are thousands.

As you know well from your own expertise and the various testimonies you already have heard over the past year...

- Food insecurity, as it is measured by the USDA today, is household financial-economic metric, related to a person's/household's ability to consistently put food on the table.
- Immediate access to food, hunger relief, is critical, and we know it takes more to "end" it – or rather help households reach self-sufficiency and stabilize lives.
- ConAgra Foods and the ConAgra Foods Foundation take a meals and more approach that manifests in a three-pronged strategy: 1) Feeding Kids, 2) Empowering Families; and 3) Pursuing Solutions.
- The strategy is guided by our own theory of change and logic model, which we have established over time, with data-driven insights and working with experts both academic and on the ground program implementers who see first-hand what is happening in the community.
 - Commission member Deborah Frank asked a question of D. Kathy Krey (THI) earlier in the testimony about the role of government and the role of nonprofit. I reiterate that we recognize and respect that the government is the largest funder in the space. The Federal nutrition programs are critical. Evidence shows that they work. This is not an either-or but collaboration to augment what works.

Through this type of work – and a continuously evolving strategy, we not only have a great exposure to what is happening across the country, but we also have a good understanding of what has a better chance of being sustainable.

In addition, within the past few years, we have initiated a collective impact effort in our headquarters community in Omaha NE, setting a bold, unified goal to reduce child food insecurity by 10% over 3 years by investing in evidence-based interventions – SNAP, School Lunch/Breakfast, Pantries, Food Budgeting skill and low cost food -- as identified by Dr. Craig Gundersen and referenced by James Ziliak who provided testimony to this Commission in March of this year. Through that effort we also can share our failing forward moments and lessons learned to date. We work in Collaboration among the six different organizations and agencies that provide the evidence-based interventions requires coordination, project management, check in meetings and measurement to maintain accountability. I will talk more about collaboration in a moment.

We know this is a national issue. However, we also know that there are impactful, longer lasting solutions happening most often at the local level.

- Borrowing a term of an esteemed colleague in this space, we believe in **informed engagement**, pilot testing an insight-driven idea, measuring the impact for sustainable implementation later and then using the evidence-base to align others to a strategy.

We also know this is a big, complex issue that takes multiple stakeholders to really make sustainable change, including those that have been mentioned today.

- Federal Government, the largest funder in the space with the Federal Nutrition Programs;
- State Government and agencies;
- Non-profit organizations that directly touch the vulnerable populations with goods and services;
- Universities that study and measure best practices in social issues and more;



Testimony –Kori Reed

June 26, 2015
National Commission on Hunger

- Communities, tax payers, neighbors, that not only fund local initiatives but also take ownership for the place in which members live;
- within the community are the vulnerable populations themselves that have a voice and should be part of any solution.
- And, the group I represent....
- Corporations that employ people in communities and community partners;

More specific to the group I represent, is the building of **public-private partnerships** and I see that also has been previously mentioned in the commission’s minutes. One of the best examples that the Federal Government has at its fingertips today is the USDA-land grant University partnership and is a prime vehicle for public-private partnerships. Each land grant university has an Extension Program Office and the Extension Offices are in every county across the country. An extension office, by the nature of its connection with the land-grant universities, has the advantage of built in metrics that are standard for a university (and great tools to articulate social impact statements); in addition extension offices offer, via family and consumer sciences, EFNEP and SNAP ED. The scale – offices in every county across the country - allows them to replicate programs and engage other partners. In full disclosure, ConAgra Foods Foundation, invests in the Food Smart Families program through the 4H arm of the extension network.

Again, I see a number of recommendations in the Commission minutes from experts in the space that address evidence-based interventions, including SNAP and other Federal nutrition programs. I am going to take a little different approach.

I have three recommendations for the commission that include both effective ways and overall enhancements to increase the process of how work gets done, benchmarks, evaluation and accountability:

1-Reward and reinforce community efforts that enhance effectiveness through **collaboration** and **systems/design thinking**.

2-Create Food Security Module-**plus** metrics that is supported by a unified theory of change/logic model, as well as proxy metrics that enhance reporting and accountability. This includes things like hunger coping strategies.

3-Look beyond funding resources of corporations to engage unusual suspects that have unique skills sets, viewpoints and capabilities to drive system change.

1-Reward and reinforce community efforts that enhance effectiveness through collaboration and system thinking.

I applaud the commission for picking a specific target within Food Insecurity, those who are VERY LOW FOOD INSECURE. Presumably, the very low food secure have the most need, and if we find what works those solutions can extrapolate to others who are low food secure. The logic is solid; the solutions might be more complex because the very low food insecure most likely need more than one intervention to sustainably lift from very low to low food secure, and even better to food secure.

I mentioned earlier, the collective impact initiative we have started, around 5-evidence base interventions. It is rare that one nonprofit, government agency or entity would offer all at the same time. We are seeing more “collective Impact” initiatives across the country, where different sectors agree to solve social issues using a common agenda, aligning efforts and using common measures of success. We see this happening more so in the areas of education, opportunity youth and health. There are a number of examples from which to learn and adapt practices, and some happening in the hunger space. Campbells’s is doing great work in Camden New Jersey, a \$10 million, 10 year commitment with bold community goals and one to study.

In May I attended the Collective Impact Forum, a partnership between FSG and the Aspen Institute for Community Solutions. I urge this Commission to study what is working outside the hunger space. Here are some key learnings from the forum.

- You don't get systems change in a grant cycle
- It is more about Pot Luck than Poker – more about what you bring to the table than what you are going to get out of it
- Need for system and process leaders in the community – are we equipping leaders with these skills?
- Different than corporations where a leader is mandating change or people have to at least attend for job performance -- a community systems leader has to be able to keep people at the table when people can opt out at any time
- The work is not pretty at times: it is an iterative learning process; we have to intentionally use the work to learn
- How do funders invest in work that may fail or take 10 years; how do they justify that work to board members
- Funder Role – **Model Behaviors; Align Resources; Catalyze Change;** know when your work is to embed the work in something else, it is not supposed to live with us forever, but may go on for much longer

I bring this up because in the recommendations from the RTI International study from Aug. 2014, I saw reference to collaboration both among and within public and private service providers, as well as other referenced to public-private partnerships.

We agree. This requires a shift in infrastructure and support, and it can take more time and resources. It goes beyond collegial working relationships, which many have in this space, to really putting the unified goal above individual organizations interest. We have seen this work well and we have seen well-intended collaborations fail because one partner has not adapted to the new way of thinking.

As one example, ConAgra Foods Foundation has created a playbook of tools to help collaboration, very similar tools to what we use inside our corporations walls when a project requires more than one division and business unit to work together.

Collaboration looks good on paper, and is the right thing to do, it is not easy. We can speak from experience ourselves as well as what we have seen in our grant-making work.

See When and How to Engage the Private Sector in Collective Impact:

http://collectiveimpactforum.org/blogs/9406/when-and-how-engage-private-sector-collective-impact?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Read%20Now%20%3E&utm_campaign=20150715PrivateSector

And 10 Lessons Learned from Engaging the Business Community in Collective Impact

<http://collectiveimpactforum.org/blogs/1/10-lessons-learned-engaging-business-community-collective-impact>

Are government agencies, in the grant process, requiring some type of intentional, clearly defined collaboration for any grant dollars in this space, going beyond the WHAT to reward the How work is getting done. Example: In order to qualify for a million-plus grant, show us how two or more agencies are working together to impact system change.

As Mr. Salvador Balcorta mentioned in his testimony, we often lack the input from those in the community who are food insecure. Will government agencies also be open to grants that reward community based participatory research (CBPB) typically includes community members to help develop and implement programs and services?

The data also says that there are some people that are below the poverty line or at least below the 130% of poverty that are NOT food insecure. What are they doing right? This is one piece of research that may be missing. How do we more aggressively tap into those insights and enable communities to rally as each community is a bit unique.



2-Create Food Security-plus metrics: Develop a unified theory of change and proxy metrics that enhance reporting and accountability.

One of the key facets to collective impact is to establish a common measure of success, and get clear on what we mean by effective ways of reducing the very low food secure.

We all respect the people who created the one, time-tested metric we have to measure food insecurity, the official USDA food security metric, full 18-item version and the 6-item version. In its most simple definition, Food Insecurity is a household economic metric, reflecting the ability to afford to put food on the table on a consistent basis. When it comes to interventions, there are a number of interrelated processes that overlap and go way beyond food, sometimes referred to as social determinants and include but are not limited to 1) employment, 2) health as it relates to food and or its effect on the ability to purchase food; 3) education to gain employment; 4) community food systems to ensure all have access; 5) environmental and other factors that contribute to food costs, from fuel to rain and commodity prices. It can get overwhelming for even those of us who have been in the space for at least a decade to think about all the other factors that could be considered.

Today, alone, we have heard a number of independent systems that consistently come up in reference to hunger, making them interdependent, including: Work readiness, health outcomes, Education/school readiness, hunger, housing, violence, immigration and indigenous communities, mental health. This makes hunger even more complex. In order to create more collaboration, it may require system mapping and design in order to determine which interventions have the highest correlation.

To gain alignment, I recommend we create and agree to a universal theory of change AND align on proxy metrics so that we can build in mechanisms for accountability. It will allow us to track immediate progress toward an issue we are trying to solve. Here is an example of what I mean:

- As I mentioned, in Omaha, we committed to invest more than \$4 million over the next three years in the evidence-based interventions identified by Gundersen to reduce Food Insecurity –



Food stamps, School Breakfast-Lunch, low cost food, food pantries and budgeting skills, all based on the premise of what will offset a families budget.

- We are using the 6-item version of the food security module; we also, however, are experimenting with a **Hunger-Coping Strategy Scale**; i.e. do you water down formula, do you eat food from a dumpster, skipped paying bills to find food, etc. This goes beyond skipping meals in today's Food Insecurity metric to find out what the vulnerable populations are doing, which may be more actionable. Marianna (addressing Commission leader) in 2013, you and your team did a great paper on When the Systems Fail, addressing individual and household coping strategies related to child. With a continuous improvement mindset, how do we build in a solid, time-tested Food Insecurity Metric and make it even more actionable.
- Why does this matter? To build momentum, we need to break down complex issues so that people can see how they can make a difference. When I started in this job 10 years ago, the Food Insecurity numbers were much better – 1 in 8 for children and today it is 1 in 5. So, we have become a lot more sophisticated and intentional as have many of you and the one, validated national metric is trending down, getting worse. There is a gap.

Some say that it could have gotten way worse, and I am not discounting that. Collectively, with the government as the largest funder, excellent, well managed non-profits at the helm and corporate partners who are investing and obsessed with measuring all, the national metric has stayed at 14% for overall hunger, even flat for the very low food secure.

At the same time, there are a lot of ideas that will make a difference. You are hearing many of them.

- I implore the nation, led by the leading funder in the space, the federal government to create a universal Theory of Change and/or even better a logic model that helps unite all of the players so that we are moving in the same direction? If the government has restrictions in leading, we have other expert resources to facilitate conversation and do strategic planning and process mapping.

- Can we establish a set of metrics that spans beyond the Food Security Module, looking at behavior base interventions -- to make it even more actionable in the short term as the Federal Level data is measured once a year and by the time is processed it is a year more removed.
- Can we bring together all of the work that is happening in this space? Have everyone get on the same page, and start with the base -- the definition of food insecurity, different than hunger relief, different than poverty.
- Here is an example: Today we, ConAgra Foods Foundation staff, as are some members of this Commission, are part of an Aspen Institute dialog on Food Insecurity and Healthcare which includes select invitees from companies, health professionals, private institutions and experts in Food Insecurity and obesity prevention.
- Through the Clinton Global Initiative, there is a Hunger Genome project focusing on domestic hunger metrics. While ConAgra Foods Foundation is not funding this effort today, I share it with the intent of sharing what is going on and getting alignment and all on the same page.
 - **What is it?** A Chicago-based social impact measurement firm, Mission Measurement, is developing the Food Security Genome, a robust research initiative to understand what programmatic factors most efficaciously produce positive food security outcomes in the US.
 - **Why is it important?** The Food Security Genome will be a tool for funders and practitioners to forecast the success of food security programs, benchmark program performance, and design more effective, cost-efficient, and impactful programs.



- **How is it being done?** To build the Food Security Genome, Mission Measurement is systematically and comprehensively codifying both the existing evaluation literature and the experiences of experts and practitioners in the field to quantify what works in producing outcomes related to food security.

3-Look beyond funding resources to engage unusual suspects that have unique skills sets, viewpoints and capabilities to drive system change.

As I mentioned earlier, there are social issues outside of food insecurity that are making some progress and we can learn from those, including education and health issues. I also thank Jeremy Everett and the National Commission on Hunger for inviting a corporate funder to share testimony. We are often asked for funding, but rarely asked to share our view; however, we see a lot of programs and have a big picture view landscape.

Inside our walls, corporate skills sets and assets go beyond funding to intellectual property, ranging from marketing expertise to process engineers to certified project management specialists and continuous improvement specialists.

We are a group of everyday problem solvers who help companies eliminate waste, turn inventory faster and rely on a core competencies of influence, accountability mapping and better outcomes. We leverage tools and process engineers to drive role clarity and accountability in process and we do process mapping to see where the overlap his happening and how we make systems move more efficiently and effectively. There is an opportunity to scope some impactful skills-base volunteerism, engaging our internal experts to leverage skills in society.

I recommend engaging a think tank, including corporations and management consulting firms that have a battery of tools at their fingertips from stakeholder alignment tools, to balanced scorecards to project charters and accountability grids. Ask how we can apply those strengths in the community that also depends on multiple people and organizations coming together to achieve a goal. Then convene groups using a true public-private partnership model to have

various stakeholders (government, non-profit, industry, academia) work together to address this crucial issue of food insecurity in our nation.

In summary:

1-Reward and reinforce community efforts that enhance effectiveness through collaboration and systems/design thinking.

2-Create Food Security-**plus** metrics: Develop a unified theory of change and proxy metrics that enhance reporting and accountability.

3-Look beyond funding resources of corporations to engage unusual suspects that have unique skills sets, viewpoints and capabilities to drive system change.